18. Sanitation and Conservancy—Cranganur—Rs. 3,766

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Sir, I move for a grant of Rs. 3,766 under 18, Sanitation and Conservancy, Cranganur. I request the House to grant the allotment.

Demand put and carried

The House rose for lunch at 1-25 p.m. and re-assembled at 2-45 p.m. with M. R. Ry. V. K. Krishnankutty Avl., Panel Chairman, in the Chair.

3. Panchayats—Rs. 2,69,831

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Sir, I move for an allotment of Rs. 2,69,831 for Panchayats. Before moving this motion, I wish to make one or two preliminary remarks on the working of this Department. It has been the custom of this House to express on various occasions that the powers of the Panchayats should be increased so as to make them self-sufficient and self-relying units. At every conference the Panchayat has been claiming for additional powers and after prolonged consideration of conflicting views as propounded by different parties and different interests, we have come to the definite conclusion that it is not proper to stand where we stand. Either we must proceed further or we must take a retrograde step. In all these self-governing institutions unless adequate powers are given, there is a tendency for institutions of this kind to decay and die. This stage it has reached when further powers should be given to the Panchayats and in fulfilment of the gracious promise given to the Panchayat Conference by His Late Highness, further powers have been extended to these Panchayats. It is the intention of the Government in the very near future to give complete autonomy to the Panchayats allowing them to carry out all the works under their responsibility and under their jurisdiction either departmentally or by calling for tenders by the Panchayats themselves, the Government officials and technical officers only tendering necessary advice and directions to the department concerned. The experiment has already been started, and I am very glad to note that in many Panchayats our expectations have been completely fulfilled by the Panchayat turning out excellent work, though we were disappointed in one or two places. It is inevitable at the beginning of any such changes, some such disappointment may arise. Yet, on the whole, as I said, the experiment seems to be a successful one and this proves that the future of Panchayats is very hopeful, indeed. I am sure, considering the general trend of the opinion in this House and the cirticisms offered by this House, that this extension of powers and privileges to

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